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ABSTRACT

Despite the turmoil of the last 6 years, there have been few educational changes on the campuses that were instituted on a corporate or conscious central basis. The reasons for this resistance to change stem in part from the cast of characters in the academic world: the administrators who often come from careers where they were little involved in educational policy, the conservative nature of the faculty, and the indifferent trustees. Changes that have taken place have often stemmed from student action. This does not mean that faculty and administrators have failed to criticize or question educational policies and practices, but that these criticisms rarely led to constructive action, and that when changes occurred they were generally of an additive nature. With the bleak economic situation, it is not possible to introduce change through expansion or addition, and the natural tendency for the faculty will be to favor a gloomy conservatism and to be reluctant to participate in policies of shrinkage or substitution. To preserve faculty democracy and involvement in governance, the faculty should concentrate on matters most important to it. This paper concludes by listing some theses pertinent to faculty governance that were made in the first report of the Assembly on University Goals and Governance. (AF)

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IMPETUS TO THE FACULTY IN UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

American colleges and universities have had more than half a dozen years of turmoil. It is deceptive to point out as some do that there has been turmoil in the past as well. For surely, the widespread character of these difficulties has had no precedent. Much of the turmoil has been directed against American social institutions generally. Much has been idiosyncratic--the reflexes of young people in the act of rejecting a culture transmitted from their elders. Much has also been directed against colleges and universities themselves and their programs. Yet despite the discontent and the turmoil the educational changes on the campuses have been relatively few, or at least the educational changes that have been instituted on a corporate or conscious, central basis have been few.

It has been said that it is easier to move a cemetery than to change a university or college. The reasons for the resistance or impediments to change are many, and not at all new; in part, they derive from the cast of characters in the academic world. In many cases, administrators have come from careers in which they were little involved in overall educational policy, and, therefore, were inclined to deal with financial or building problems or similar aspects of university existence. In recent years, some have wanted to avoid trouble, and given the many discontented constituencies with which they had to deal, one of the ways of avoiding trouble was to concentrate on

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the maintenance of the organization. Furthermore, the management of crises became increasingly necessary, leaving little time for innovation or reform or anything else.

The principal members of the faculties have permanent appointments, and, in most colleges and universities, considerable veto power over proposals on curriculum and other educational issues. The faculties replicate themselves in the choice of new colleagues. Professors have generally been educated as graduate students in one of a small number of large universities. They frequently try to duplicate in the colleges and universities where they teach, the conditions they had observed themselves as graduate students, including narrow specialization, and the tendency to favor advanced graduate students in educational programs.

The trustees, who have the ultimate legal responsibility for colleges and universities, rarely act as though they have responsibility for the long-range future of the institution as well. Serving on a board of trustees of a major private institution, or a board of regents or the equivalent of an important public institution, carries a considerable amount of status. It has sometimes been an elite club, in which, though there were many time-consuming requirements, there were not many other requirements, apart from private and governmental fund-raising. But, faced with many of the difficulties in the last few years, there is great confusion as to which responsibilities have been delegated by trustees and which have not.

Those educational changes that have been made, have often stemmed from the students. The educational changes have been few. They frequently

consist of eliminating required courses or distribution requirements for various fields or easing grading. They are a response to student pressure for a kind of academic amnesty, in which the students expect to be measured very little or not at all and to have few restraints upon them. The most noticeable changes of all on campuses have not been educational, of course, but behavioral. Here again, the changes have tended toward removal of controls: students do not want to be held accountable for dress, modes of speech, living arrangements, hours, forms of entertainment.

If there has been a tendency to maintain the status quo, except in terms of requirements students must meet, it is not because faculty or administrators have failed to criticize or question educational policies and practices. The most comprehensive, informed, detailed and constructive criticisms come from insightful, concerned, wise members of the academic community such as David Riesman. And the most thoughtful and wide-ranging institutional studies come from the dedicated analyses and deliberated proposals of groups of faculty and others such as those undertaken at Berkeley, Toronto, Swarthmore, Stanford. But the gap between the grasp of the educational problems and the translation of solutions into practices has been extraordinarily wide. Dwight R. Ladd, in his Carnegie Commission analysis, Change in Educational Policy, found that although a number of leading institutions engaged in self-study and had considered various policy changes, "generally speaking... the proposals developed in the studies became less venturesome or simply disappeared as they passed through the various centers of decision-making". Unless there was strong leadership, the

diffusion of power in a large academic institution simply meant that many people could exercise negative power and few or none felt compelled to offer alternatives.

Faculty senates or other large organizations of faculty are unused to deliberating about and then acting on educational objectives and means to attain them. In prior years, decisions might have been made in some cases centrally, without benefit of faculty wisdom. Or decisions might have been made by faculty and administration working together. But in either case, decisions were of an additive nature. Nothing was given up. Changes in programs could be offered in periods of expansion and prosperity by adding on another center, another program, a new school or institute.

In such a setting, certain limited changes were made in colleges and universities without much pain. It sometimes did not seem necessary to consider the costs. The budget process was one of making decisions by additions rather than subtractions or substitutions. It is the rare college or university which in its budget processes looks continually afresh at its total allocation pattern. Rather the scrutiny is more myopic and focuses on what increments might be added to a department or other unit of the institution.

Given the combination of the permanence of the faculty and allocations made by addition rather than by substitution, there have been great pressures for campuses to expand. Only by growing in numbers of students could there be justification for increasing facilities and numbers of faculty. In an expansion period, difficult choices on what, if any, field should be curtailed, are avoided. Those institutions that made conscious decisions not to expand

the number of students, often denied themselves the opportunity to enter into more venturesome fields of study.

Now that the economic situation is bleak, even at the more affluent institutions, it will not be possible to introduce change through expansion or addition. Either the existing resources including, of course, the most precious resources, human talents, must be utilized in new ways, or new programs or activities will come at the expense of old ones. In some cases, unfortunately, existing programs may have to be curtailed or contracted without any substitutions, in order to balance precarious budgets. Under these circumstances, the natural tendency of faculty would be to favor a gloomy conservatism: any enthusiasm for change is likely to be sobered if not extinguished.

How much of a voice is the faculty likely to want in determining policies of contraction, curtailment or substitution? Possibly, the impetus to more faculty democracy and participation which has come recently with campus turmoil will be stemmed under the weight of financial problems. That would be as regrettable as it would be understandable. For although there are considerable dissatisfactions with the ways in which faculty participation has worked--it has been cumbersome, voraciously time-consuming, often exercising only the power of negation--despite these troublesome characteristics, faculty concern and involvement in institutional policies and practices can only be regarded as a great advance.

It is obvious that I would regard a retreat by faculty as detrimental to the governance of the college or university. Yet as I have suggested,

I think that there will be a general reluctance of faculty to participate in policies of shrinkage or substitution. The laissez-faire attitude of peers doing their own thing under expansion would have to give way to the uneasy judging of peers when resources are scarce. Certainly, the smaller the group, the more uncomfortable the task. A small department cannot be expected to suggest that it be eliminated, nor that it work in different ways. If a group has any positive morale, it believes itself to be doing important and worthwhile work, and to be doing it competently. But can a larger group perform a similar task any more readily? Is it possible for a school or a faculty senate to steel itself to phase out a program or department that in its judgment (or in the view of an outside judging body) is either excessively expensive or mediocre or duplicatory of a like department in a neighboring institution? Can colleagues pass judgments on some within the group--judgments that would sever part of the institution? When Columbia University made a decision to discontinue a school, was it not a relief for most faculty members that this was largely an administrative and not a faculty decision?

In the face of economic stringency (and I regret that this is what I foresee for at least some time) what can be done to preserve and strengthen faculty democracy, to guard it from sharing the fate of the restrictive craft union, to instill in it the spirit of hopefulness and inventiveness? Reforms in faculty governance, that would be as efficacious for times of adversity as for prosperity and expansion are in order.

There is little uniformity in faculty governance, as there is little in

university governance as a whole. Nevertheless, at most institutions faculty must be selective about the issues in which it wants to be most directly engaged in the gathering of evidence, in the analysis of it, and in the proposing of alternatives. The issues on which the faculty wishes to be most involved should be those not only most dear to its perogatives but also most related to its competence as a body. If, in the matter of faculty governance, there can be selectivity, then much of the onerous character of participation can be avoided, and so too can the resulting complaints about apathy. In the matter of faculty governance (as in all governance), the rubric of the late, great architect, Mies van der Rohe, has much to commend it. He said "less is more". In his view, minimal structure provided maximum strength, beauty and satisfaction. So could it be with faculty governance. With concentration on the matters that are dearest to it, the faculty could exercise greater influence and show greater ingenuity than it can when its governing energies are diluted over many areas of attention. I said greater influence because the faculty, as one group, cannot be considered to be the final determining voice.

If the faculty governing body chose those areas of greatest continuing concern to it, it could rid itself of many activities which on numerous campuses are overlapping, trivial or ineffectual.

It is precisely because those of us most involved in The Assembly on University Goals and Governance believe that the energies and talents of each group at universities and colleges should function at its peak, that we speak of a division of labor and a system of accountability and responsibility for all.

One of the main features of the theses in the first report of The Assembly is the interrelatedness of one proposal to another. Unfortunately there is no opportunity here to discuss in detail the role of the faculty in relation to the board and the executive function; we would have to reproduce the entire report. I have singled out a few of the theses most pertinent to faculty governance.

- - A college or university--even when it is small--is an intricate organization. Trustees, administrators, students, professors, staff, alumni, and legislators and public officials are all assumed to have an interest in the institution. It is easy to underestimate (or exaggerate) the influence of any one of these. Good governance depends on a reasonable allocation of responsibilities, that makes the structure of authority credible for all these groups. It is impossible that all should decide everything or be consulted on every issue. No parliamentary or bureaucratic procedures can be developed that will guarantee such participation and consultation in most institutions. University governance exists to make education possible. This objective is most likely to be achieved, and not in a superficial sense, where there is a division of responsibility, a sharing of information, and a readiness to subject authority to the requirements of a well-defined system of accountability. Too few institutions have developed these characteristics in their mode of governance. Many more ought to do so.

- - A system of college or university governance should itself be educative for all who take part in it. A style of institutional arrangements appropriate to higher education should be borrowed from the academic ideal

of reasoned scholarship, in which findings and proposals are submitted to critical review. For too long, colleges and universities have borrowed their governance models from business and public administration. Neither is appropriate for most functions of academic institutions.

- - Part of the ambiguity about presidential and other academic authority arises because there are two major organizational systems: the associational system and the executive system. In the first (for example, in a faculty senate) all members are presumably equal so long as they accept the basic premises of the association and act collegially. In the second (for example, in an administrative hierarchy) a central set of incentives and sanctions is established by executives. These conflicting organizational systems should be combined into a system of delegated, responsive governance, in which authority and responsibility are exercised by executives who themselves are accountable and thus can be checked by faculties and others when there is extreme dissatisfaction with their decisions or actions.

- - Arguments for representative faculty senates or for town-meeting faculty senates are legion. The small college can function well with the latter type. The larger institution should think seriously of having both--the representative body for most issues, the town-meeting senate when a sizeable proportion of the faculty wishes an opportunity for further deliberation. Small groups of faculty generally dominate faculty senates and similar organizations. At many colleges and universities, a large number of faculty either choose to avoid senate assignments or are not invited to take part in them. The same names appear repeatedly in the

membership of key committees. If faculty self-governance is in fact to flourish, many who are devoted to teaching and scholarship, who would often rather stay aloof from administrative responsibilities, need to become involved. Membership in the executive bodies of large senates or in representative senates or major faculty committees ought to rotate.

- - Faculty or faculty-student committees have grown more important in the governance of colleges and universities. These are sometimes chosen by administrators, who have some sort of "representative" principle in mind. In other cases, they are chosen by senates, university councils, and similar groups. Departmental, divisional, school, and other committees have also proliferated. Committees in such profusion create confusion. Their number ought to be reduced and a time limit should often be set for them. To save the energies of both faculty and students, and to make committees more effective, the more important ones ought to have administrative staff members assigned to them. This, of course, raises the hazard of committees becoming the servants of the staff, but that problem can be guarded against, whereas the inefficiency that frequently develops when there is no staff cannot.

- - The tendency to create unicameral legislative or advisory bodies for colleges and universities raises the possibility that important issues specific to either faculty or students will be obfuscated. Where such councils or campus-wide senates are established, separate faculty, student and other deliberative bodies should also be maintained.

- - Faculty and students serving on the governing boards of their own institutions might lead boards into day-to-day academic decisions that ought in fact to be delegated. However, governing boards should often include professors and administrators from other institutions. Recent alumni are often closer to the perceptions of students than others, and should be considered for board positions. Faculty and students ought to have the opportunity to nominate outside trustees, though not necessarily to select them. The opportunity to nominate by a petition signed by a designated number of faculty or students--alumni frequently have such a privilege--ought to be experimented with. Faculty senates, student governments, employee organizations ought all to have means available for communicating with the governing board.

- - There is little self-regulation by faculty in most institutions. Only the most flagrant evidence of gross misbehavior will involve an individual in disciplinary actions initiated by colleagues. Desirably, the faculty member who, for example, interferes with the academic freedoms of colleagues or students ought to be subject to faculty-imposed sanctions under a self-generated code of faculty conduct and responsibility. The alternative to such self-regulation may be a form of additional outside control that carries hazards for intellectual freedom in the colleges and universities of the country.

- - Despite the abuses common to permanent positions, professorial tenure needs to be retained as a guarantor of academic freedom against political and other pressures. Yet, means ought to be developed to encourage and facilitate the early departure of those who are making small

contributions to their institution and their students. To this end, pensions should be reorganized so that professors may retire (and in some cases be encouraged to retire) at substantial partial pay after twenty years of tenured service at one or more universities. This arrangement is similar to others that prevail in the foreign service, the military and various civil service systems where indemnity offers a viable reconciliation between competence and security.

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To repeat, these are just some of the theses, or propositions for educational improvement included in the first report which relate to faculty governance. The theses are designed to stimulate further consideration of the issues raised, to begin discussion rather than to end it. It is for this reason that we hope that they may help encourage debate, additions, substitutions, new ways of thinking about governance. It would be most regrettable if faculty were to retreat from responsibility in the face of budgetary stringencies. Faced with adversity, faculty may be willing to yield its influence at points in decision-making that are least critical and to create a new basis for responsible self-government which does in fact for the first time face up to educational change and priorities.